

Filling the Gaps News Conference

Speaker Bios

James R. Kuipers is a mining environmental consultant, and the principal and a consulting engineer with Kuipers and Associates based in Butte, Montana. He received a B.S. from Montana College of Mineral Science and Technology in mineral process engineering, and is a registered professional engineer in Colorado and Montana. He has worked on mining and environmental projects including engineering design, permitting, operations, reclamation and closure, and financial assurance for over 20 years. Since 1996, his primary work has been as a consultant providing expertise to public interest groups, state, federal, and tribal governments, and industry relative to mining environmental issues. Previously, he worked as a miner, engineer, and manager in the hardrock mining industry. Jim also has expertise in the field of oil and gas reclamation and financial assurance and produced water treatment.

Keith Ashdown is the Vice President for Policy and Communications of Taxpayers for Common Sense, a leading national budget watchdog. Keith helped start Sustain Communications, a non-profit environmental communications organization based in Chicago. He served there first as Communications Director and then as Vice President of Programs from 1996-99. He has extensive communications experience in environmental, transportation, and other public health issues. He has a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Saskatchewan, Canada.

Peggy Utesch is a writer and graphic designer from New Castle, Colo., and member of the Western Colorado Congress. Peggy recently moved from one of the last agriculturally producing areas on Colorado's I-70 corridor. Encana, North America's largest gas producer, had drilled 24 wells within a half-mile of her former home.

Ray Muggli farms south of Miles City, Mont., and operates a pellet processing plant. Ray is a volunteer member of the Northern Plains Resource Council's Coal Bed Methane Task Force.

Thomas J. Irgens has been farming since 1970 in Springbrook, N.D., and is a member of the Dakota Resource Council. He is a former chairman of the National Sunflower Board and former board member of both the NoDak Mutual Insurance Co. and the Farm Bureau.

Donald Spellman ranches near Spotted Horse, Wyo., and is a member of the Powder River Basin Resource Council. His ranch is the middle of extensive coalbed methane development, and Don confronts the impacts daily.